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# SELECTIONS

FROM

# JOHNSTONE'S POEMS

E. F. JOHNSTONE

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# JOHNSTONE'S POEMS

Author of

"NO VERMONTERS IN HEAVEN"

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## My Mother's "Rock of Ages"

I have heard the finest singers that America can boast,
I have heard the best from lands beyond the sea ;
But in memory one song to-day appeals to me the most
'Tis my mother's "Rock of ages cleft tor me."

She could sing with faith and feeling anything that offered praise,
Psalms of David or "My Country 'tis of thee"
And my mind is full of pictures of my childhood's happy days
And my mother's "Rock of ages cleft for me."

In the quiet of the evening, in the morning bright and fair
And at noon day I have heard her tuneful plea,
And to-day while I am waiting there is music everywhere
From my mother's "Rock of ages cleft for me."

In the hour of temptation I have heard the music swell
And those words of faith have made the tempter flee :
Ah ! my soul can understand it but my words can never tell
How I prize her "Rock of ages cleft for me."

Now her lips are cold and silent but her voice I still can hear
Sweet and tender as it ever used to be;
For a moment's meditation brings the echo soft and clear
Of my mother's "Rock of ages cleft for me."

She is waiting for the Master in her low and narrow bed,
For a cheerful, faithful follower was she
And a ceaseless benediction seems to fall upon my head
From my mother's "Rock of ages cleft for me."

Purdon

Elder Thomas H. ~~Pendon~~, Rutland, Vt.

WAITING with others who have gone before
The dawn of resurrection morn,
When saints shall gather on the other shore
Where loved ones shall be parted never more—
Where Adam's children meet—the glad new born.

Serene and brave, unmoved by worldly care,
Kind, social, tender, fearless, noble, good;
Mighty in faith, in word, in deed and prayer
He did not fear the Masters cross to bear;
He was a blessing to the neighborhood.

Ah! yes, and far beyond for up and down
The mountain state his faithful feet have trod
Not seeking any perishable crown,
Undaunted by the world's protentious frown,
He sought to lead his fellowmen to God.

He reached far down to help the erring rise,
He served the Master every fleeting hour;

Cheerful, benevolent, awake and wise
He used his hands and feet, his ears and eyes—
Yea worked for God with every ransomed power.

I know one man just balanced on the rim
Of everlasting death, who looked around,
And saw a faithful hand outstretched to him
And tho his chances seemed exceeding slim
The prodigal both peace and pardon found.

What made him true and loving, humble, meek
The fearless enemy of every sin ;
What made him words of truth and comfort speak
And wipe away the tear from many a cheek ?
It was the Loving Christ that dwelt within.

## Character.

YOU may wear the royal purple and a crown upon your head,
You may boast a hundred millions and control the price of bread,
Men may call you rich and mighty and exalt you in the land,
But remember in the judgment only character will stand.

You may be a famous beauty or a singer of renown,
You may squander twenty thousand in the purchase of a gown,
Multitudes may gaze upon you and pronounce you great and grand,
But remember in the judgment only character will stand.

You may be a politician or an orator of note,
Cheering thousands may applaud you as you thunder from your throat,
The support of countless voters may effect the thing you planned,
But remember in the judgment only character will stand.

You may seek the world's approval and accept the devil's bribe
Cherish greed and hate and envy like a pharisee or scribe
But the scale of even Justice is in the Almighty's hand
And remember, in the judgment only character will stand.

You may preach to lordly sinners from a pulpit made of gold,
You may tell the old, old story of the shepherd and the fold,
And your eloquence and learning may a princely fee demand,

But remember in the judgment only character will stand.

You may revel in your palace where your servants meekly bow,
But the years will leave their record in the wrinkles on your brow,
Time will tear you from your idols, breaking every golden band,
And remember in the judgment only character will stand.

When the chill of death is on you, creeping upwards from your feet,
When the pulse at last surrenders and the heart declines to beat
With your record, just your record, you will reach the distant strand,
And remember in the judgment only character will stand.

Record! record! just your record! friends of mammon or of God,
Pilgrims on the narrow pathway or the road exceeding broad,
Listen! seek ye first the kingdom and receive the Master's brand,
For remember in the judgment only character will stand.

Record! record! judgment! judgment! on we hasten to the throne,
All our thoughts, our deeds, our motives, to the Judge supreme are known,
We may seek the firm foundation—we may build upon the sand—
But remember in the judgment only character will stand.

## Not Willing to Go

WE are told of a land indescribably grand
Where sorrow and pain are unknown,
And worry and care have no stopping place there
There is never a sigh nor a moan ;
This land we are told is like Eden of old
Where the tree of life ever shall grow
'Tis a beautiful place where few of the race
Have ever been willing to go.

We stand by the side of the friend who has died
And mourn that the spirit has fled ;
When he's placed 'neath the sod we engrave "gone to God"
In the stone that we place at his head ;
Tho we claim to belive he has gone to receive
The bed that our God can bestow
We are always in doubt as to how he came out
And we never are willing to go.

And neighbor, I fear, that our treasure is here
And we have grown very fond of our sin ;
Tho we claim from afar that the gates are ajar
I fear we may not all get in
When trembling age sweeps our feet from the stage
Or sickness expels at a blow
Our friends raise the cry that we've gone to the sky
But we never are willing to go.

If pilgrims we roam while a beautiful home
Awaits us with splendors untold,
Why should grief smite the heart when we are called to depart
To that beautiful city of gold ;

O ! we preach and we pray but to trust and obey
We are often exceedingly slow,
We sometimes declare we have friends over there
But we never are willing to go.

At the set of the sun we say "Gods will be done,"
When the world can await us no more,
And we add with a sigh, that we're ready to die
Then depart to the shadowy shore
But let no one forget that we part with regret
From the things that we worship below ;
Of our going away we have nothing to say
But we never are willing to go.

## Equal Rights

BELIEVE or doubt, be saved or damed, take or reject the light.
Worship what, when, and where you will, you have a perfect right.
The infidel, my Christian friend, has rights as well as you ;
And so has the Mohammedan ; so also has the Jew.

Conscience is free in this fair land ; and he who lifts a voice
To worship God or God deny, proclaims his right of choice.
This right is sacred, and the Lord Himself declares it so.
Then what is man, that he against the Word of God should go—

To build the thumbscrew and the rack and persecution's fire,
To make a man a hypocrite, a martyr, or a liar—
To make him praise, or claim to praise, against his own conviction ?
My friends, this matter is beyond all human jurisdiction.

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve"—yea, choose the good or evil ;
'Tis ever man's God-given right, tho he may serve the devil.
Tho Heaven's love may fail to win a man from sin's dominion,
Jehovah never uses force to change a man's opinion.

The history of the world declares religious legislation,
Wherever found, has been a curse to every tribe and nation ;
And yet to-day the bigot would be conscience for his brother,
And by a civil law would force his views upon another.

God's day of rest, His Sabbath day, the seventh from creation,
Some men religiously observe with praise and adoration ;
Some men observe another day, if not by God directed.
In either case, men's equal rights should ever be respected.

Render to Cæsar what is his, and to Jehovah render
What He requires at thy hand, with conscience clean and tender.
Thus taught the Master when on earth, the same to-day and ever—
Use the compelling power of love, but use coercion never.

## Have You Noticed It?

HE lay on a sick bed and swore,
That he would be wicked no more ;
But when he got well the terrors of hell
Were as distant as ever before.

Thank God for repentance sincere,
It must not be confounded with fear ;
I am bound to declare that our fate over there
Depends on our conduct while here.

## Like Dad

I'M gest uh little boy ut skool learnin ter read an rite
An muther seys that I'm ter young ter be erway ut nite
But when I grow er little more I'll be most awful glad
An I'll be fit ter graduate when I kin sware like dad.

I don't no much bout polerticks
Cause I'm ter young ter vote
But I kin feel er kind uo taste er coming in muh throat
Muh muther seys that drinking stuff is very awful bad
But I'll be gist like all the rest when I kin drink like dad.

I sometimes git er cigarete an smoke it on ther sli
An when muh muther smels my bref uv corse I half ter lie
An when I half ter fess it up muh ma shes awful sad
But I'll hav er big long pipe when I kin smoke like dad.

Muh dad he takes a grate big chu and sticks it in his jaw
An chus it up and squirts out juce ther most yer ever saw
He says most everybudy does an it is all ther fad
An I'll be a squirter too when I kin chu like dad.

Fer dad he smokes and swears an chus an drinks up rum as well
An when things don't go rite at home how he can kick an yell
I ges my dad he ort ter no if enybudy had
An when I grow ter be a man I'll be gist like my dad.

## Profanity

TO swear or not to swear which shall it be
Shall I employ rank profanity
When I salute my neighbor on the street
Or some new story to a friend repeat ?

Shall I upon the great Jehovah call
Like shameless ruffians at a druken brawl
Or when I talk for business or for fun
Shall I appeal to the anointed One ?

Shall I so far depart from decency
That I shall call upon the Deity
And mix that holy name with talk obscene
Or shall my language be correct and clean ?

From men and boys most everywhere is heard
An oath with nearly every other word
'Tis prevalent indeed and growing worse
'Tis almost fashionable now to curse.

A habit ! yes, but one so mean and base
That it should be despised by all the race
What Pope has said I wish to emphasize
"To swear" is neither brave, polite nor wise.

## As We Live

YOU will die as you live, let no one think
That preacher or prelate, priest or pope,
As we balance on death's slippery brink,
While the darkness gathers black as ink
Can give us any other hope.

We have the word of the living God
So plain that the man who runs may read ;
On the narrow way or the way that is broad.
The servants of truth or the slaves of fraud
We go at a varying rate of speed.

Shall we gather the perishing things of time,
And follow the call of greed and lust—
Shall we fellowship with the sons of crime,
And squander the years of our manhood's prime
And then for the life eternal trust.

Nay ! Lost is the man, who rejects thru life
The pardon purchased by Calvary's Lamb ;
And lost is the mother, sister or wife
Who choses the ways of sin and strife
And the death bed repentance is always a sham.

We cannot deny the Master here
In what we think and say and do
And then before God's throne appear
With calm assurance instead of fear
And claim the reward of the clean and true.

Lord ! Lord ! they will cry in the Judgment day
But many will cry to no avail,
For their feet have willingly gone astray

And they curse the while they ought to pray ;
They will perish with those who weep and wail.

If the spirit of him who raised his son
From the silent grave, in you abide,
Then he will finish the work begun
And you will hear the glad "well done,"
When we gather on the other side.

But, friend, be sure as you live you will die
For your character determines your fate ;
And they who tell you differently lie,
For you cannot God thru life defy
And then dodge the guard at the golden gate.

## No Vermonters in Heaven

I dreamed that I went to the city of gold
To heaven resplendant and fair ;
And, after I entered that beautiful fold
By one in authority there I was told
That not a Vermonter was there.

Impossible ! said I many from my town
Have sought this delectable place,
And each must be here with a harp and a crown
A conquerors palm and a clean linen gown
Received thru ~~unmented~~ unmerited grace.
The angel replied, all Vermonters come here
When first they depart from the earth
But after a day or a month or a year
They restless and lonesome and homesick appear
And sigh for the land of their birth.

They tell of its many and beautiful hills
Where forests majestic appear ;
Its rivers and lakes and its streams and its rills
Where nature the purest of water distills
And they soon get dissatisfied here.

They tell of ravines, wild, secluded and deep
Of flower decked landscapes serene
Of towering mountains, imposing and steep
Adown which the torrents exultingly leap
Thru forests perrenially green.

We give them the best that the kingdom provides,
They have everything that they want,
But not a Vermonter in heaven abides—
A very short period here he resides
Then hykes him away to Vermont.

## My Brothers Sins

I do not know my brothers sins—
His failings either great or small,
I only know that virture wins,
And vice recedes where truth begins,
And mercy hovers over all.

I do not know the battle fields,
On which he wrestles with despair—
On which he overcomes or yields—
Where evil smites or heaven shields,
But God is love I will declare.

In each heart is some good desire—
I want to make the statement broad—
Some spark to light a holy fire—
God grant that it may not expire—
And he who placed it there is God.

Then let us not condemn a man
Nor judge a woman anywhere,
But rather do the best we can
To learn and teach Jehovah's plan,
For, only this is just and fair.

'Tis not the good we have not done,
That makes us righteous—me and you :
We shall be judged —yea every one
Born since creation was begun
By the good that we have failed to do.

Twas not my hand that laid him low,
Not mine the hand that passed the cup,
Nay ! twas not I that struck the blow,
My brother, this may all be so
But be it yours to help him up.

## When the Death Angel rings

WHAT wonderful things when the death angel rings
Are the dollars we've hoarded for years,
Are the houses and land on this perishing strand,
When before us the reaper appears :
When he comes forth to slay we have money to pay—
To bribe him his stroke to withhold ;
But alas ! and alack ! we cannot drive him back
With all of our silver and gold.

The money, we own may embelish a stone
To point out the place where we lie,
But cannot hold the breath in the hour of death
Nor pilot a soul to the sky ;
It may bury the clay with pomp and display
And write post mortern praises galore ;
But ruler or slave it deserts at the grave
And bids him adieu evermore.

Of silver and gold we have none we are told,
Was the statement of Peter and John,
But such as we may we will give you to-day
Behold, your affliction is gone ;
And the Jews were amazed as they speechlessly gazed
On their erstwhile half parylized brother ;
Help us Lord thru thy son not to worship the one
And give us lord more of the other.

## The Form Intact

EASTER Sunday bright and fair;
Go to church and the hats are there,
Every shape and every size
Squares and ovals meet your eyes,
Flowers tremble, feathers nod
All arranged for the glory of God;
Garments gay on every side
Surely the lord is magnified.

Perfume fills the holy air,
While the parson offers prayer
And each dame begins to guess
Where the other got her dress;
Fashion sees her late decree
There observed most loyally
Saint and sinners dressed so smart
They cannot be told apart.

Mrs. "Haughtie" holds her head
High to show herself well bred—
Should she try to kneel to pray
Half her clothes would rip away;
Jewels flash upon her hands—
Costly gems from foreign lands
Powder lingers on her skin
Surely Christ abides within.

Godly people now are told
By their silver and their gold,
By the way they fix the hair
And the garments that they wear;
Poor humility is dead

Heart religion from us fled
But surviving every storm
We have still retained the form.

## Skating with the Boys and Girls

TO-DAY I closed my desk and went with the boys and girls to skate,
There were Arthur and Charlie and Will and Ned and Bessie and Nance and Kate
And many more from the neighbors 'round came down with their sleds galore,
And I turned old time three decades back and I was a boy once more.
I showed them some of the old time tricks with never a miss or fall
And one little fellow "hollered" out "Why the old man licks 'em all."
Old man! thought I, what can he mean, as I circled in childish glee,
But when he yelled, "Good, good ole man," I knew the boy meant me.

But I felt as young as the youngest there—enjoyed the fun as well
And laughed as loud as the little boy when somebody slipped and fell;
And though at forty my hair is black and I need no "specs" to see
I know, when that boy yelled "good old man" that that same boy meant me,
Years do not make a fellow old nay, our thoughts accomplish this
And they who put all fun away, know not how much they miss.
You may call it "kidish" and all of that, it suits me at any rate,
And whenever I have a chance I'll go with the boys and girls to skate.

## My Neighbors Old Line Fence

THE time of year is drawing near
When grass begins to sprout,
And very soon—to wit—next moon
We'll turn our cattle out;
And our friendship fast will ever last
With little or no expense.
If you'll start in now before you plough
And fix your old line fence.

While I suspect that gross neglect
Keeps many fences down,
I'll not abuse nor yet accuse
A neighbor in the town;
But this I know and I can show
And may a little hence
Breaks not a few where cows get thru'
My neighbors old line fence.

My neighbor swears he'll make repairs
And home his dairy keep,
But many a day I chase away
His cattle and his sheep,
And hurl great stones to break their bones
Despite the consequence,
And all because he will not pause
To fix his old line fence.

Within my mind towards mankind
Are thoughts of love and peace;
God's will be done with every one
And let all discord cease;
Let friendship reign on hill and plain
Controlled by common sense,
I hope and pray my neighbor may
Get out and fix his fence.

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